

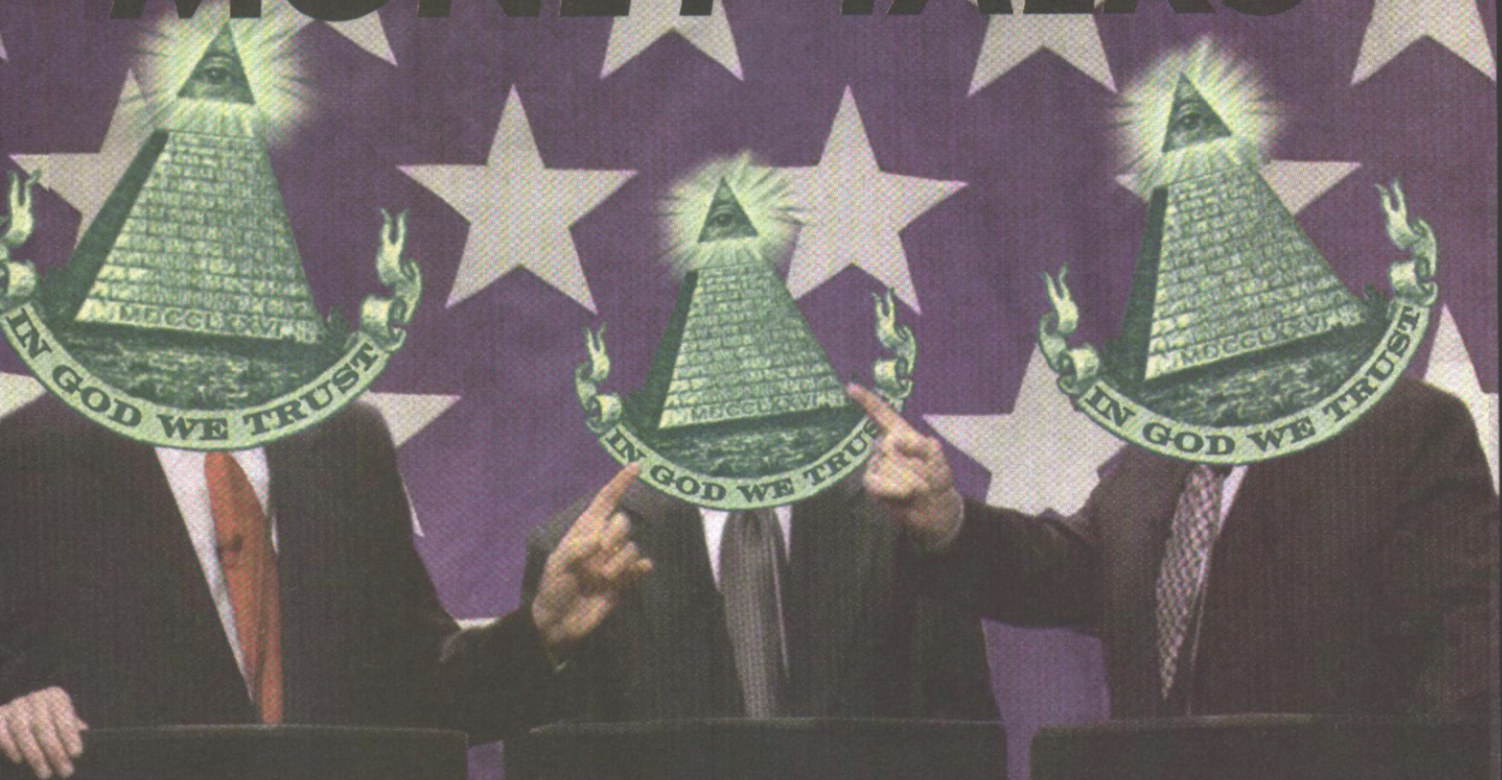
THE END OF BOHEMIA • NATURAL BORN RAPISTS

# In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

March 6, 2000

## MONEY TALKS MONEY TALKS



### ELECTION 2000

Doug Ireland      Juan Gonzalez  
Jeffrey St. Clair      Pat Murphy  
David Moberg      Joel Bleifuss



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*In These Times* (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 24, No. 7) went to press on Feb. 4, for newsstand sales Feb. 21 to March 6, 2000.

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**Subscriptions** are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). Call (800) 827-0270.

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## Letters

### Seattle Anarchists

I was pleased to read David Graeber's nonsensationalist article addressing the issue of anarchists and the Black Bloc who claimed responsibility for the storefront window-smashings and assorted acts of vandalism in Seattle ("Anarchy in the U.S.A.," January 10). But it's also worth stressing the high level of frustration with the anarchists' actions that was expressed in the streets.

Tens of thousands of protesters came to Seattle for a peaceful protest. The majority—farmers, Steelworkers, environmentalists, human rights activists and anarchists among them—were none too pleased at the timing of the burst of violent energy directed at an assortment of corporate chain stores. Many complained that these few dozen youths (many of whom indeed had traveled up from Eugene, Oregon, and were publicly praised for their actions by John Zerzan) undermined the press attention given to the enormous variety of productive outdoor demonstrations and indoor teach-ins.

I'm not so naïve as to think that if the Black Bloc had not struck, demonstrators would have been assured of more media coverage. But I disagree with Graeber's assertion that the Black Bloc "got a point across." From where I stood as a reporter and photographer, that "point" was lost on many protesters, local citizens and national viewers. At the time of their attack, the Black Bloc made no statements, going so far as to run away from—and to spray-paint the cameras of—local journalists who were making an effort to understand their motivations.

I know where my anarchist sympathies lie, and it's not with the latest group of crash-and-dash window-smashers to assemble under the black flag.

**Silja J.A. Talvi**  
Seattle

### Spine Chilling

Dean Baker makes some short-sighted conclusions that send chills down the spines of Canadians and others trying to protect their social services from the capitalist machine ("Real Free Trade," January 10). I know he is trying to be cheeky, but his satire confuses professions and services, thereby sounding similar to what a certain superpower is advocating. Baker incorrectly states: "There has been little or no effort to facili-

tate trade in professional services, such as medical care, legal services or accounting." In fact, the United States is very busy hustling their corporate service industries into other nations. One condition for U.S. support of China's admission into the WTO was the opening of the Chinese market to U.S. insurance corporations.

As a registered nurse, I witnessed the destruction of public health care in the United States and the funding cuts to the Canadian public system—actions that are consistent with free trade and structural adjustment policies. Eliminating barriers to trade in professional services is precisely what U.S. corporations want in order to take over social service contracts in the former public sectors of other nations.

There is nothing inherently wrong with being protectionist. Many developing countries have made great improvements in their national economies through protectionism. But the issue is not protectionism vs. free trade. The ruling-class agenda is to maximize profit and control. Our agenda is democratic control of the economy and society, environmental sustainability, species protection, consumer safety and global solidarity.

**Scott Weinstein**  
Montreal

**Dean Baker replies:** Scott Weinstein is right on two points. The United States has attempted to open foreign markets to some of its professional services, and there is nothing wrong with being protectionist.

But it is still important to recognize that the United States remains enormously protectionist in the provision of professional services domestically. This point is crucial because progressives must recognize that it wasn't good luck and hard work that made doctors, lawyers, accountants and other highly paid professionals "winners" in the new economy. Rather, these groups have been able to use state-imposed barriers to restrict competition from professionals in developing nations or even other OECD nations. While these professionals tend to be the strongest advocates of "free trade," they would be terrified if they ever had to face it themselves.

### Correction

On page 29 of the February 21 issue, the credit was left off the illustration by Chris and Viva Silva.

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www.inthesetimes.com

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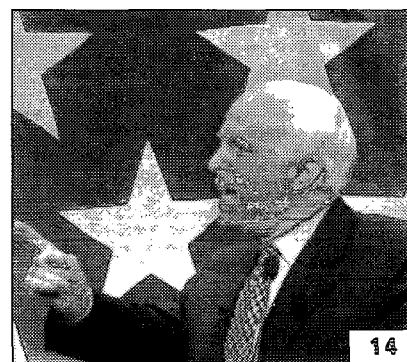
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# Vanishing Voters

Once again, more citizens will stay home than go to the polls

In his State of the Union address, President Clinton reminded Americans of their good fortune in being "alive at this moment in history" when "we have so much prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis or so few external threats." But all of his hyperbolic hoopla can't mask the fact that the upcoming presidential election will show us once again that this is a democracy of the few, by the few and for the few.

In every presidential election since 1960, the percentage of eligible voters who go to the polls has decreased (with two exceptions: 1984, when Reagan ran for re-election, and 1992, when Ross Perot energized the apathetic). The 1996 Clinton-Dole race was the first presidential election since 1924 (when women were first allowed to vote) where less than 50 percent of eligible voters cast ballots. In November, it's a sure bet that once again, more citizens will decide to stay at home than go vote.

This doesn't bode well for democracy. Last year Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government established the Vanishing Voter Project to come up with ways to invigorate the American electoral process. Tom Patterson, the project's director, divides the 50 percent or so of the population that doesn't vote into three groups. The chronically apathetic account for about half of nonvoters (roughly one-quarter of the voting population). Their ranks, full of those who have no interest in politics, have remained steady over time. As Patterson sees it, this group will never engage in political life: "They never got the religion and are never going to get it."

The second block of people who don't vote are those alienated from the current political scene. Patterson puts their number at roughly one-quarter of the nonvoting population (about one-eighth of the voting population). They have an interest in civic affairs and a sense of citizenship but are disgusted by political scandals and the growing role of money in elections. Patterson says these citizens could be re-engaged "if you put the political ship back in order."

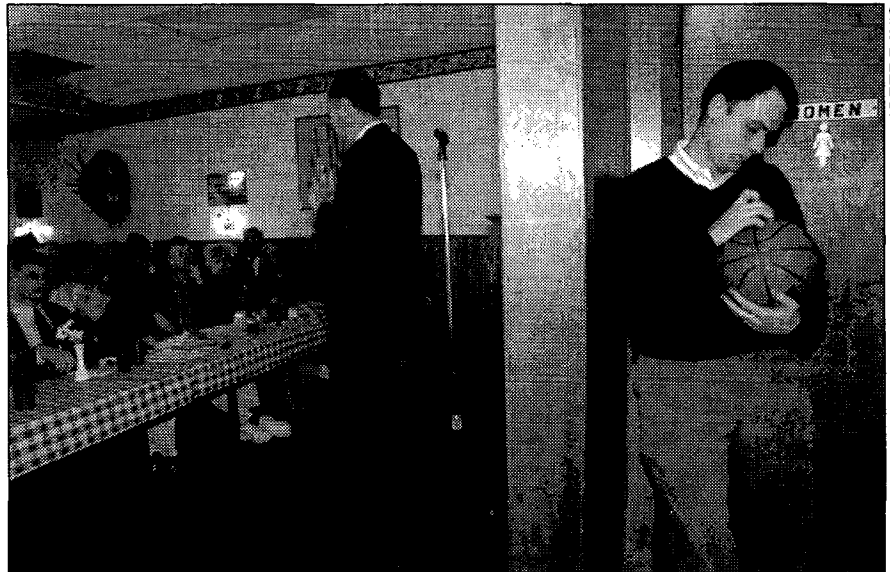
The third and fastest growing group of nonvoters is apolitical young people. According to Federal Election Commission statistics, only 32 percent of those aged 18 to 24 voted in 1996, compared to 71 percent of those aged 55 to 70. Though young people historically vote at a lower rate than their elders, the number of nonvoting youth is now at a record level. In 1972, for example, 50 percent of 18-to-24-olds cast ballots.



By Joel Bleifuss

Patterson believes that young people have been disconnected from politics by changes in the media landscape. Due to the advent of cable TV and the Internet, younger voters' political interests have not been nurtured by regular reading of newspapers and magazines or exposure to network newscasts. "It is not that they think politics doesn't matter, it is just low on the totem pole," Patterson says. "They are quite strongly oriented to the marketplace, instead of the public arenas. They are more attuned to their job, their career and acquiring material possessions. That is where they see their future lying."

But voting does matter, as those who do it understand. In 2000, as in 1996, the well-off will vote at a higher rate than anyone else. In 1996, 74 percent of voters with family incomes above \$75,000 went to the polls as opposed to the 61 percent of voters with family incomes between \$10,000 and \$15,000 who stayed home. Not surprisingly, officials elected by wealthier voters craft laws and tax policies that benefit this better-off portion of the electorate (as well as the rich people and corporations who fund their campaigns). For the past 25 years, government policies have tilted the rules governing the economy in favor of those with lots of assets.



JOEFF DAVIS

In 2000, even more voters will be alienated from the political scene.

Hence, since the mid-'70s, the richest 1 percent of households have found their share of the national wealth jump from 19 percent to 42 percent.

The 2000 election will see a record-breaking amount of special interest money poured into campaigns, ensuring that candidates will shy away from proposing any policy that might



anger their wealthy sponsors. And just as surely, the 2000 election will see more people become alienated from the electoral process. It's a direct relationship: With each election, more money gets funneled in and more people opt out.

The president's recent State of the Union address didn't offer alienated citizens any reason to renew their civic participation. "We stand on the mountaintop of a new millennium," Clinton said. "Behind us we see the great expanse of American achievement; before us, even grander frontiers of possibility. ... America again has the confidence to dream big dreams."

What are those dreams? A job that pays a living wage? A college education for everyone who wants one? Urban schools anyone would be happy to send their child to? An election that can't be bought by big money? Universal health care? A sensible military budget? In Washington these days, those aren't dreams, they're hallucinations.

For them to become reality, we need to redefine the government's role and shift public debate out of the "vital center," that political dead zone staked out by Clinton and his friends in the Democratic Leadership Council, where discussions of disparities of wealth and abuses of corporate power don't exist. ("We restored the vital center, replacing outdated ideologies with a new vision," Clinton told the nation.) Notably, only four words in Clinton's 9,160-word speech were devoted to campaign finance reform, an issue even *Time* magazine says "has divided all of us into two groups: first- and second-class citizens."

The dearth of presidential vision has been mirrored in the ongoing race for the Democratic nomination. For example, the health care proposals of Gore and Bradley are indistinguishable to all but the preternaturally workish and, as the debates proved, impossible to convey to a general audience. Neither was able to translate this issue (one of the top on voters' minds) or any other into voter enthusiasm, which explains why Democratic turnout in New Hampshire was so lackluster. As the *Chicago Tribune's* James O'Shea wrote: "Instead of the Democrats and Republicans of yesterday, who were strongly defined along class lines, America's political parties are starting to resemble two wings of one party—the property party."

Curtis Gans, director for the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate in Washington, says the decline of political parties as participatory civic organizations has contributed to voter alienation. "The principal mobilizing agencies of our society, the political parties, have grown weaker and no longer have grassroots sinew," Gans says. "They are largely used for the raising of money and the dispensing of consultant services. We have a misalignment of our political party structure in which we have a Republican Party that is way to the right of the American center and a Democratic Party that has found political profit by aiming itself exclusively at the middle class."

Indeed, what the contest for the Democratic nomination has lacked is a progressive candidate who is willing to bring voters to the "grander frontiers of possibility" that Clinton so easily and emptily invokes. Jesse Jackson ener-

gized the electorate in 1984 and 1988. Imagine if Ralph Nader or Minnesota Sen. Paul Wellstone was the third voice in the Bradley and Gore debates. He would have had the opportunity to spend hours on NPR, CNN and C-SPAN talking about ways to save family farms, provide universal health care, curb corporate power, cut military spending and take government back to the people. He probably wouldn't win, but issues would get introduced into the public debate and vanishing voters might find someone who was speaking for them.

As it stands now, Nader, who refuses to be tainted by the Democratic Party, looks like he will make another third-party run for president. Though the national media will ignore his candidacy, the politically pure of heart will be able to vote their conscience—and once again have a grand old Quixotic time pissing into the wind.

This is not the time to give up on all Democrats. Good ones are out there. In the hours prior to Clinton's State of the Union address, the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the

**"We can have a democratic society or we can have great concentrated wealth in the hands of a few. We cannot have both."**

**— Louis Brandeis**

Progressive Challenge ([www.netprogress.org](http://www.netprogress.org)), the caucus' educational support network coordinated by the Institute for Policy Studies, held a "Progressive State of the Union" featuring speeches and position papers.

The group's income inequality task force, chaired by Reps. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) and Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), drew inspiration from the late great Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, who said, "We can have a democratic society or we can have great concentrated wealth in the hands of a few. We cannot have both." Lee spoke of her "A Living Wage, Jobs for All" bill that, in the framework of full employment and economic rights for all, advocates a living wage based on the cost of living in particular areas so that no one is faced with living below the poverty line while working a full-time job.

The health care task force chaired by Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), issued a statement that read in part, "The Progressive Caucus is united in its goal of making health care a right, not a privilege. Every person should have access to affordable, comprehensive and high-quality medical care."

And Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), who chairs the Progressive Caucus, took on the "the insatiably ravenous military industrial complex." He pointed to a recent General Accounting Office report that found that the Pentagon has \$67 billion worth of inventory items in storage, \$41.2 billion of which is unneeded, even in time of war. "We require fiscal discipline by other agencies and the Pentagon should be no different," DeFazio said. "But instead of forcing the Pentagon to clean up its act, Congress and the president would rather throw billions more into the abyss."

Big dreams? Yeah, some members of Congress still have them. ■

# At Death's Door

By Salim Muwakkil

**W**hen Illinois Republican Gov. George Ryan announced in late January that he was imposing a de facto moratorium on the death penalty, he was hailed as a courageous politician for facing down his party to take a moral stand. And while we don't want to rain on his parade, we'd like at least to suggest we hold off on the canonization ceremonies.

Does it take an act of courage to insist that the judicial system be fair? Is it heroic to ensure that the state not commit premeditated murder? Isn't that the very least of what we expect of public officials? To characterize Ryan's commendable but modest efforts as courageous is to drastically lower our expectations of government.

Ryan made his announcement two weeks after the release of Steven Manning, the 13th inmate freed from Illinois' Death Row since 1987. Since reinstating capital punishment in 1977, Illinois has put 12 men to death. Although the ratio of exonerations to executions in Illinois is unusually high, the conditions that account for it are found across the country. Florida, for example, has freed 18 inmates from Death Row and executed 44. Since 1976, 85 people have been freed from Death Row nationally; 610 have been executed.

Ryan, who says he still supports the death penalty (and indeed oversaw an execution last May), declared he would place all state executions on hold until a committee completes a study of a system fraught with error. Illinois is the first of the 38 states with the death penalty to call a halt to all executions. "Until I can be sure that everyone sentenced to death in Illinois is truly guilty," Ryan said, "until I can be sure with moral certainty that no innocent man or woman is facing a lethal injection, no one will meet that fate."

What does "moral certainty" mean? Was the governor referring to some future time when human beings will no longer be influenced by social attitudes and political passions? So far there's no word on who Ryan will appoint to his committee, but if their study finds a way to determine "moral certainty," it will make human history.

The dubious milestone marked by Manning's release helped spur Ryan's actions. But the governor said a five-part series published last year in the *Chicago Tribune* also played a role in his

efforts on the inmates' behalf, many of those freed would be dead. Faced with such overwhelming evidence, Ryan could no longer claim that the 13 exonerations were evidence that "the system works."

There's little doubt that Ryan's startling announcement also was timed to divert attention from a growing investigation of a bribery scandal at drivers' license bureaus, which occurred during the governor's tenure as Illinois secretary of state. One of his top aides was indicted the day after the moratorium announcement.

Whatever his motivation, Ryan at least has finally broken the deadly status quo. Since he heads the presidential campaign of Texas Gov. George W. Bush in Illinois, maybe

**Does it take courage to insist that the judicial system be fair? Isn't that the very least we expect of public officials?**

Ryan can slip the candidate a copy of the *Tribune* series and quiz him about "moral

certainty." Texas executes far more people than any other state. In 1999 alone, Bush signed 35 death warrants, almost three-times the number of his nearest rival, Gov. Jim Gilmore of Virginia. Maybe Ryan can convince his fellow "compassionate conservative" how courageous it would be to halt the slaughter. ■



## The Highest Possible Price

Russia refuses to learn from its mistakes in Chechnya

By Fred Weir

MOSCOW—One thumbnail definition of insanity is when someone does the same thing over and over, but expects different results. By this measure, Russia's political and military elite are sliding inexorably into the blood and muck of a second war in the Caucasus because they have taken leave of their senses. Whatever the Kremlin may say, the 4-month-old "anti-terrorist" operation against the tiny separatist republic of Chechnya is turning into a full-scale replay of the disastrous two-year conflict that ended in humiliating defeat and the withdrawal of Russian troops in 1996.

"The new war in Chechnya is part of a political strategy for consolidating power in Moscow," says Alexander Iskanderyan, director of the Center for Caucasian Studies in Moscow. Acting President Vladimir Putin, who faces elections on March 26, has staked his reputation on bringing rebel Chechnya to heel, halting the disintegration of Russia and restoring "order." Strong public approval of the war brought the Kremlin victory in December parliamentary elections.

But the war news has turned grim, and Putin's popularity is declining. "We are headed down a well-trodden path to disaster, like the last Chechen war, or the Soviet Union's failed intervention in Afghanistan," Iskanderyan says. "What is meant to be a swift military operation to solve a political problem turns into a long guerrilla struggle. We respond with massive repression against the civilian population, and in the process we lose any hope of solving the political problem."

When the military offensive began last September, Russian leaders promised it would be a limited security operation, carefully targeted against armed Chechen groups and aimed at facilitating a settlement acceptable to the republic's long-suffering population. The original plan called for only taking Chechnya's sparsely populated northern plains, which were traditionally Russian. It was a way to create a buffer zone, put pressure on illegal warlords and offer Chechen civilians the option of living under Russian rule.

The generals publicly pledged that one thing they would never do again was storm Grozny, the ruined and booby-trapped Chechen capital that became the graveyard of entire Russian brigades in the previous war. "Do you think we are stupid?" a Russian special

troops responded with a savage security crackdown against civilians in the occupied communities. A few months ago, many refugees fleeing the fighting made ambivalent comments, or even said they could reconcile themselves to Moscow rule if it brought peace and order. Not anymore. "I will never live with the Russians," says Asya Mukhamedova, a 23-year-old woman who escaped from Grozny in mid-January. "If my male relatives are all killed, I will take up a gun and fight in their place. The Russians are our enemies forever."

And once again, the Russians are choking on Grozny. Raw Russian recruits are dying by the hundreds—some say thousands—in bloody infantry assaults against entrenched, Chechen fighters who move rapidly through the city's wrecked streets, shattered Soviet-era apartment blocks and labyrinthine sewer system. As *In These Times* went to press, the Russians were about to take the smoldering pile of rubble that once was Grozny, but they can claim no victory. After exacting the highest possible price from the Russians, the rebels are now melting into the nearly impenetrable mountains of southern Chechnya to prepare a spring offensive.

"The Russians are repeating all of their mistakes of the last

war," says Mohamed Asanukayev, deputy chair of the Chechen State Council, a pro-Moscow shadow government that works with Russian forces in Chechnya. Asanukayev should know. He was on the other side last time, a minister in successive rebel governments until he fled a messy power struggle two years ago.

Disenchanted with Chechnya's failure to build viable state institutions or a functioning economy after winning its de facto independence in 1996, a number of the republic's surviving elite went over to the Russians. But it's not turning out to be a happy choice. Asanukayev asks, "When will the Russians learn that you cannot solve complicated political problems by military means?" ■



A Russian soldier in the pile of rubble that once was Grozny.

forces colonel asked me last October. "Grozny is of no strategic importance. It's just a death-trap, and we will avoid it at all costs."

However, quick victory on the northern steppe, where Russian heavy weapons and air support easily prevailed, encouraged the generals to spill into the more urbanized and mountainous south. Some Chechen communities, sick and tired after years of lawlessness and privation, voluntarily opened their gates to the Russians. Others did so after receiving a dose of heavy bombardment. In Moscow, there was some bragging about winning the battle for Chechen "hearts and minds."

But when rebels started staging hit-and-run raids behind Russian lines,

AFP/ITAR-TASS





JEREMY HOGAN

**ELF strikes again:** The radical environmental group Earth Liberation Front has claimed responsibility for a January 22 arson attack on a gated community in Bloomington, Indiana. The luxury subdivision is being built near a local lake's watershed. "This is the drinking water supply for Bloomington," says an ELF public statement. "It is being jeopardized by development and roads." ELF also has claimed responsibility for the infamous fire at a Vail, Colorado ski resort in 1998, and, more recently, a New Year's Day arson attack on a biotechnology project at Michigan State University.

## Secrets and Lies

After a failed uprising,  
Ecuador's indigenous groups  
warn a civil war could ensue

By Steven Dudley

QUITO, ECUADOR—Just 18 hours after indigenous groups had briefly taken power and forced President Jamil Mahuad to step down, they were suddenly ready to leave Quito. Dressed in dark, thick sweaters and donning their trade mark brown suede hats, members of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), the country's strongest indigenous organization, hastily finished off their potato soup and moved toward the awaiting buses. "They betrayed us," one man said. "And in our culture, when someone betrays you, you cut his head off."

Indigenous leaders, unions and popular organizations were the most vocal sectors calling for Mahuad's resignation in mid-January, but most Ecuadorans supported them. Just weeks prior to his downfall, the president's approval rating was a mere 7 percent, and the economic recession that precipitated the massive protests seemed

destined to continue. Since the new year, the value of Ecuador's currency, the *sucre*, had slipped 25 percent, and the president's indecisive nature led few to believe that any decision he could make would garner support in the country's defiant Congress. In the weeks leading up to the coup, strikes increased and several top officials resigned in protest of government policy.

The stage was set for what at first glance appeared to be a spontaneous uprising by indigenous groups, but quickly turned into an historic betrayal of the CONAIE and their supporters.

By all accounts, the coup began on January 21, when mid-level military officers, led by Colonel Lucio Gutierrez, joined protesting indigenous groups in Quito. The army ushered the groups into an empty congressional building where the calls for the end of Mahuad's administra-

tion began—first from the indigenous and popular organizations, then from Gutierrez and General Carlos Mendoza, the commander of Ecuador's armed forces.

Mahuad, sensing that his mandate was slipping through his fingers, appealed to



GUILLERMO GRANJA/REUTERS

**CONAIE, Ecuador's largest indigenous coalition, has led the growing movement for government reform.**



# Natural Born Rapists

**A**ll men are natural-born rapists. This is not the sort of allegation that usually gets serious treatment in the mainstream media. But Randy Thornhill and Craig T. Palmer have been journalistically feted from coast to coast for making just that charge. The attention has been enough to more than double the print-run of their book, *A Natural History of Rape*, three months before it will be released by MIT. Not bad for a couple of uncharismatic guys with a meandering theory based on bug research. The key to their success: They use their theory to criticize not rapists, but feminists.

Professors of evolutionary biology at the University of New Mexico and evolutionary anthropology at the University of Colorado, respectively, Thornhill and Palmer argue that rape has given rapists a reproductive edge in the contest for genetic selection. Rape may be hard-wired into the species. At the very least, it is a product of the male breeding drive.

While the writers say rape is wrong and that they are out to stop it, they contend we need to face facts. For a quarter of a century, they say, people informed by Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* have viewed rape as "unnatural behavior having nothing to do with sex." That hasn't worked. But where feminists have failed, Darwin can come to the rescue.

Heaven forbid. The techniques these guys propose to stop rape sound like suggestive counseling. Just in case a young man's thoughts have not naturally drifted to sexual violence, Thornhill and Palmer advise lecturing boys on the "impulses" that are their birthright. And they caution young women that because evolution has favored men who are quickly aroused, "the way they dress can put them at risk."

But in the excerpt that appears in the January-February edition of *The Sciences*, Thornhill and Palmer provide no data to back up the claim that the skimpily dressed are raped more often than the frumpy. Instead, much is made of a grabbing appendage on scorpionflies

(insects Thornhill has studied in depth) that seems to suggest that the natural world designs for better raping. The authors point to data that they say show that most rape is not "gratuitously" violent, that most raped women are of child-bearing age, and that the most



"distressed" rape victims are fertile and married. But the studies they cite are 20 years old—done before a movement helped survivors to talk openly. Clearly their sources (absent in the abstract) deserve a closer look.

"It's advocacy and the science is sloppy," says Jerry Coyne, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Chicago. This is not the first time Thornhill has been accused of sloppy science. A few years back, *Time* dedicated its cover to a Thornhill "report" linking symmetrical features to genetic health and better sex. That too, was based on dubious data.

But Coyne says half the reporters he has spoken to seem to have only the slightest idea of Thornhill and Palmer's thesis. "They've mostly read other media accounts," he says.

Indeed, the media have swept the two from the dry world of science journalism to the country's most popular talk shows. *Dateline* and *Today* interviewers have swallowed their science whole. The way Melinda Penkava introduced Thornhill on NPR's *Talk of the Nation* was typical: "Now evolutionary science enters the picture." "Scientist" Thornhill was put up against "feminist" Brownmiller.

And that's the point. There is no original research in *Why Men Rape*, and their theory ignores a multitude of contradictions. Stumped by homosexual

rape, the rape of the old and the young, and by the impotence of many rapists, Thornhill and Palmer simply ignore assaults that make no reproductive sense. But even they know better. In an essay he co-authored in 1983, Thornhill was honest enough to point to a contemporary estimate that only "about 50 percent of rapes include ejaculation." He ignores that here.

What Thornhill and Palmer are really about is advancing the cause of biology against sociology. "This is the *Bell Curve* of anti-feminism," says Jackson Katz, creator of a new film from the Media Education Foundation, *Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis of Masculinity*. "It discourages tackling the economic, social and political factors that support male violence."

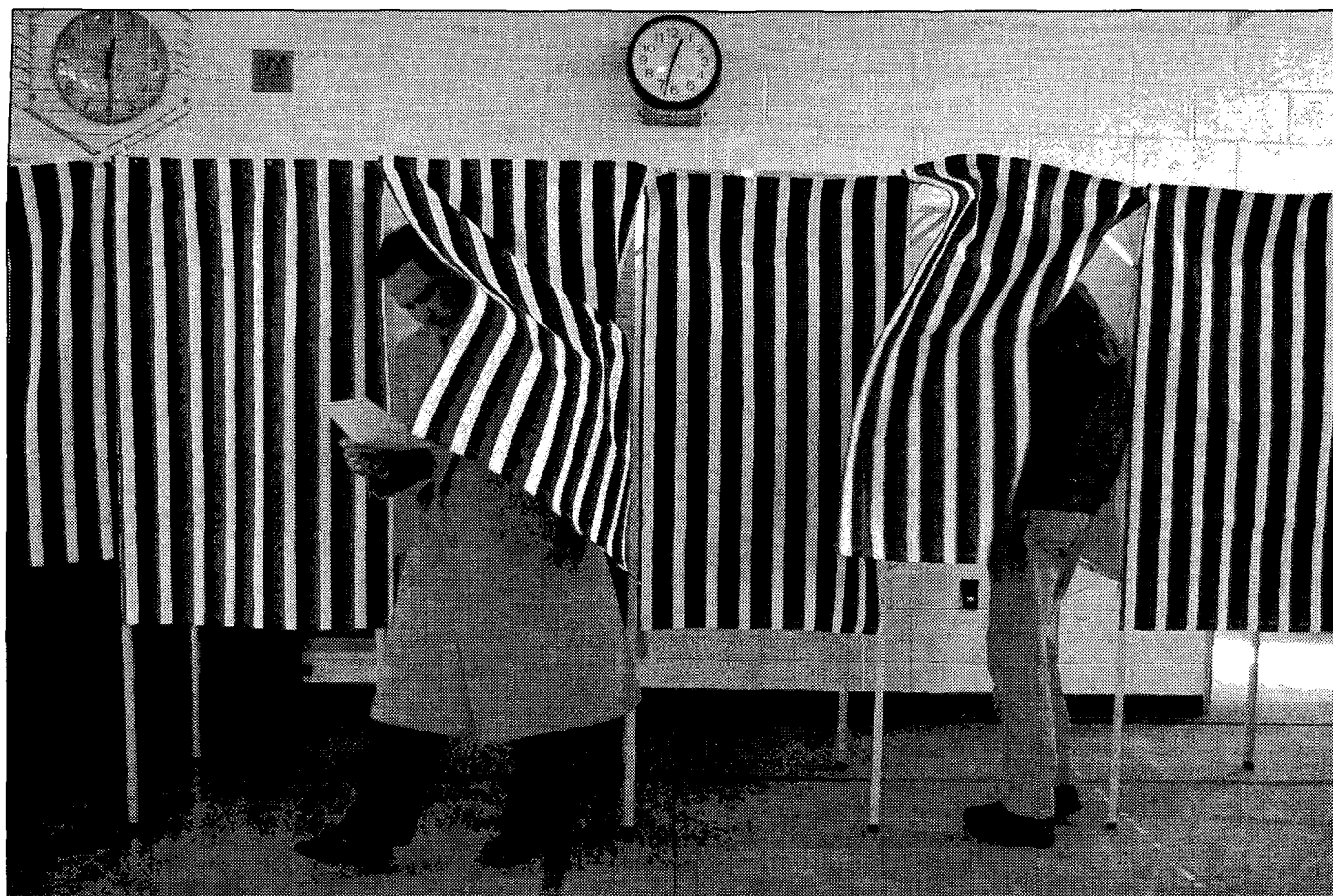
As Coyne—a biologist himself—puts it, "They're on a mission to swallow up social studies." That's why the first chapter of their book is dedicated not to rape, but to an attack on social scientists, who, they say, mistakenly over-emphasize social learning. "In reality, every aspect of every living thing is by definition biological," they write.

Well, sure. We live and breath with quirky equipment developed over gener-

## Does an appendage on scorpionflies suggest that nature designs for better raping?

ations. But thinking and choosing and wanting and hating are hard things to explain in a laboratory.

Thornhill and Palmer aren't the first to consider that maybe all men are potential rapists. Rape survivors often grapple with that thought. It occurred to Karen Pomer, who was raped in 1995 by a man who went on to rape an 83-year-old woman. But years of work on sexual violence led her to a different conclusion: "I don't think people do this if something didn't happen to them," she says. "I'm glad we're asking why men rape, but 'because it's natural' is no sort of answer." ■



KENNETH LAMBERT/WASHINGTON TIMES/NEWSMAKERS

# **GUSH VS. BORE**

***Despite New Hampshire, the primaries are a foregone conclusion***

***By Doug Ireland***

**I**t's not *only* the economy, stupid: That's one quick way to sum up the message sent by New Hampshire presidential primary voters. Granite Staters resoundingly trumped the conventional wisdom, which holds that in a period the electorate has been taught to regard as an economic boom, voters will behave like so many contented cows. Instead, in a record turnout, New Hampshire voters voted massively for two candidates they perceived as opposed to the status quo in American politics.

John McCain's impressive double-digit drubbing of George W. Bush and Bill Bradley's comeback to within two whiskers of Al Gore in New Hampshire's winter of discontent are only the latest signs of massive voter disgust, however inchoate, with the corruption of our money-driven political system. Jesse Ventura's 1998 victory against the two major political parties in Minnesota was another such indicator; so was San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano's left-populist mayoral campaign last fall, which managed to snare 40 percent of the vote in a late-starting,

no-money, two-week sprint against an incumbent mayor with a \$3 million war chest.

Of the two primary candidates whom the voters regarded as anti-establishment, McCain had the more consistently sharp-edged approach: Relentlessly on message, he hammered away at what he called the "iron triangle" of lobbyists, campaign cash and legislation, and adopted the "reform" label for his self-proclaimed "crusade." Although New Hampshire exit polls showed only 8 percent of voters identified campaign reform as the deciding issue, it became the prism through which they arrived at the conclusion that McCain was an honest man.

Bradley actually had the tougher position on paper—he'd close the gaping loophole that renders the McCain-Feingold bill meaningless by extending its soft-money ban to state political parties (through which much of the access-buying cash was pumped into the sewer that was the 1996 Clinton-Gore fundraising shakedown). But it was only after his feeble showing in the Iowa caucuses that Bradley began raising the issue of Gore's honesty and character.



That even a weak cup of tea like Bradley managed to rack up 48 percent in New Hampshire reinforces New York Sen. Pat Moynihan's conclusion that Gore "can't win" in November. Dollar Bill is, after all, a centrist gasbag who has tap-danced slightly to Gore's left for electoral advantage, calling himself the man of "big ideas" even though he has so far advanced only one—a health care plan that, although it's marginally better than Gore's, Bradley has been unable to convincingly explain or defend against Gore's megaphoned distortions.

A week before the primary vote, the chattering classes had all but written off Bradley's chances, and daily tracking polls had him losing by as much as 19 percent. Then came the Bradley-Gore New Hampshire debate, in which Bradley decided to stop acting like a punching bag and, as he diffidently put it, started "throwing a little elbow." Even then, he left the all-out frontal assault on centrist sleazebag Gore to his surrogate, Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey, who criss-crossed the state calling the roll of the veep's serial mendacities and dirty fundraising: Gore's Temple of Doom and the Buddhist nuns, "no controlling legal authority," the Lincoln Bedroom, Love Canal, *Love Story* and the invention of the Internet, to name just a few. But that was nearly enough. From then on, the tracking polls began registering Gore's decline. If the Bradley campaign's tardy and half-assed attacks sufficed to bring Gore so close to losing, imagine what the GOP—whose lavishly funded attack dogs will have no Bradleyish reticences—will do to him by November.

**M**oreover, the New Hampshire results suggest that Gore can't win the votes of independents in the fall. They made up a third of voters in both party primaries, and Bradley carried them with a solid majority (while losing regular Democrats). All that said, it will still be nearly impossible for either McCain or Bradley to win their parties' nominations. New Hampshire's Republican electorate is less conservative than those in most of the three dozen other GOP primaries where McCain will have to compete simultaneously in just a few short weeks. Plus, McCain, unlike Bush, will have enough money to contest only a few chosen battleground states (and won't have the luxury of campaigning full time in them for two and a half months, as he did in New Hampshire). Of course, if the Vietnam vet wins South Carolina, Bush will have a real fight on his hands.

As for Bradley, he has enough money on hand—at least \$20 million—to allow him to go on to California and New York on March 7. But Gore has Bradley out-organized big-

time in those states—especially among electorally potent racial and sexual minorities—where electoral interest in the contest is not at the hothouse New Hampshire primary levels. And though California, too, allows independents to vote in its open primary, with their help Bradley could win the Big

Enchilada beauty contest and not gain a single delegate—only the votes of registered Democrats count in determining delegate totals. Add to that the Democratic "super-delegates"—party regulars, officials and fat cats who are stacked in advance for Gore and make up a fifth of the convention delegate totals—and Bradley's chances are further reduced.

So, as these lines are written on the morning after New Hampshire, it still looks like the November contest will be between Gush and Bore. But the results of the first primary suggest that there is enough discontent with big-money establishment politics, even in this over-heated paper economy, to provide fertile ground for the impending candidacy of Ralph Nader. Unlike his suicidal non-campaign in a handful of states four years ago, this time Nader is expected to run an all-out, 50-state effort and try to raise serious money to fund it.

Nader's rousing anti-WTO and pro-working-class crusading shows that he still has the ability to bring audiences to their feet cheering—especially younger voters disengaged from the two major parties, who provided thousands of footsoldiers in the McCain, Bradley, Ammiano and Ventura campaigns.

Nader could well get the 5 percent of the vote needed to give the fledgling Green Party recognition by the Federal Election Commission, winning it campaign matching funds and making it a permanent part of the national political discourse. That might be just enough to begin—ever so slightly—nudging the political center of gravity in this country back toward the left. ■



## **Discontent with big-money politics provides fertile ground for Ralph Nader's impending candidacy.**

# FREE RIDE

**The Washington media love him. Meet the real John McCain.**

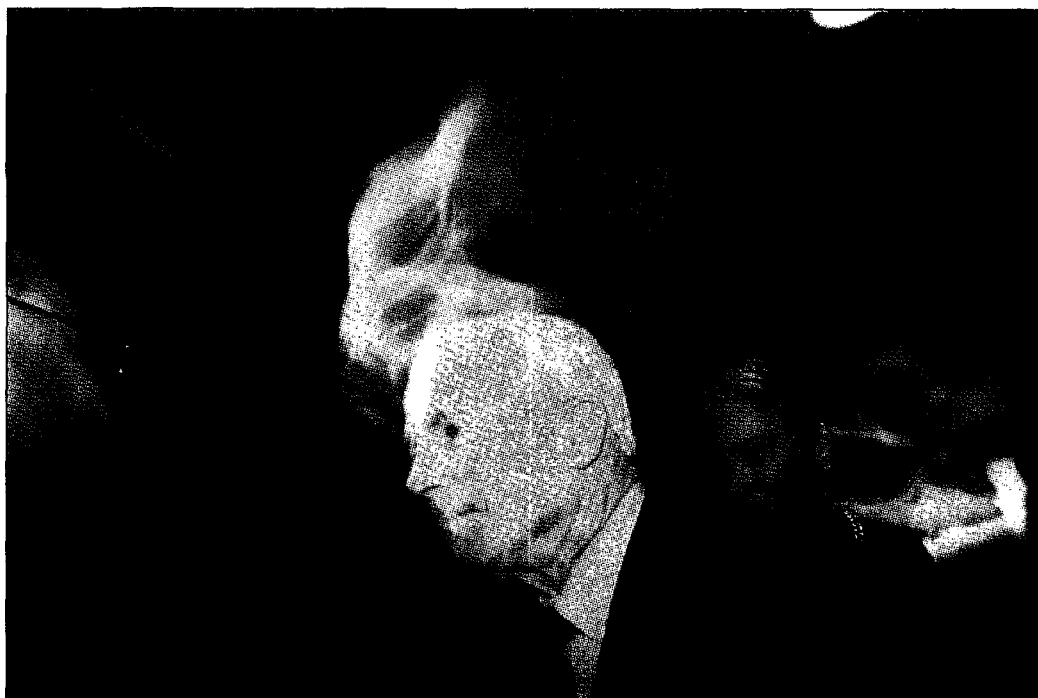
By Pat Murphy

**T**hose who've known John McCain since he began his Arizona political career two decades ago made two mistakes. First, we underestimated the Washington media's gullibility for a political schmooze job. Second, we underestimated McCain's mastery in reincarnating himself as a lovable maverick glowing with political virtue and amiable charm while camouflaging his bullyboy and deceitful ways.

If McCain were to become president, Americans would wake up to more than a commander-in-chief with a prickly temperament and a low boiling point. McCain is a man who carries get-even grudges. He cannot endure criticism. He threatens. He controls by fear. He's consumed with self-importance. He shifts blame. McCain's thin skin and demand to have it his way have been obvious since infancy, when he held his breath until he was unconscious, and later in Washington, where he has resorted to pushing and shoving colleagues when irritated.

McCain is a man obsessed with political ambitions but plagued by self-destructive petty impulses. It was vintage McCain who exploded when the *Arizona Republic* questioned whether the man dubbed "Senator Hothead" in Washington is fit to be entrusted with presidential powers. Instead of conceding what's common knowledge about his volcanic personality, McCain exploded in denial, blaming a newspaper vendetta and George W. Bush for "orchestrating" the criticism. When his claims drew snickers, McCain shifted to another explanation: He explodes when he sees "injustice."

But this sort of blame-fixing works where it counts—with reporters who've come to blindly lionize McCain as a high-minded champion of political virtue fighting demons of political corruption. Perhaps McCain's master stroke in inoculating himself from serious media scrutiny was his early fusillade of confessions—his adultery ruined his first marriage, the Keating Five scandal was a blemish on his reputation, he indulged in wild and reckless misbehavior as an Annapolis midshipman. He finally endeared himself to the media with his Quixotic promise to reform campaign financing and by holding court with reporters aboard his "Straight Talk Express" bus.



JOEFF DAVIS

The new journalism of dwelling on personalities rather than tedious investigative digging gives McCain a free ride from the national media. Swooning media ensure McCain special treatment in the right places: 60 Minutes correspondent Mike Wallace cooed on the air that he likes McCain so much, he might leave TV to become his press secretary. *Salon's* Jake Tapper dubbed him "basically just a cool dude." Newsmen of another generation note that reporters covering McCain also are reluctant to seem tough on a man with McCain's painful experience as a prisoner of war.

One who hasn't been so quick to fall in line is *Washington Post* columnist David Broder, who warned on NBC's *Meet the Press* that "after the experience we all had with President Clinton [ignoring Arkansas reports of his misdeeds], I'm not inclined to discount the view of home-state reporters and journalists who have covered a candidate over the years." A few enterprising non-Arizona journalists have peeled back the McCain veneer. *Boston Globe* reporter Walter Robinson spent several weeks digging into McCain's Arizona behavior and reporting his dark side. Ditto Ted Rose of *Brill's Content*. And the acknowledged Arizona media expert on McCain, reporter Amy Silverman of the *Phoenix New Times* (more on her later), gave readers of *Playboy* a McCain portrait not found elsewhere.

ABC's Sam Donaldson came close to giving millions of viewers a clearer picture in a taped interview with Silverman for 20/20. But the segment was canceled the night before airing, fueling speculation that McCain's oversight of



Bush's appointments to environmental rule-making boards and commissions also have showed a typical lack of zeal, amounting to little more than a clique of celebrities, industry hacks and financial patrons. Some of the headliners: Nolan Ryan, former ace pitcher of Bush's baseball team, the Texas Rangers; Donna Howard, actress on the TV hit *Dallas* and flack for the NRA; Richard Marquez, a former Monsanto executive; cosmetics mogul Dick Heath, who has raised \$127,000 for the governor's political campaigns as a member of the Bush's "Pioneer Club"; and oil industry lobbyist Robert Huston, whose clients include Chevron, Shell and Exxon. Not surprisingly, Bush has garnered millions of dollars from oil and gas interests during his political career, but the governor doesn't see these financial inducements as problematic. "There's no such thing as being too closely aligned to the oil industry in West Texas," Bush has said.

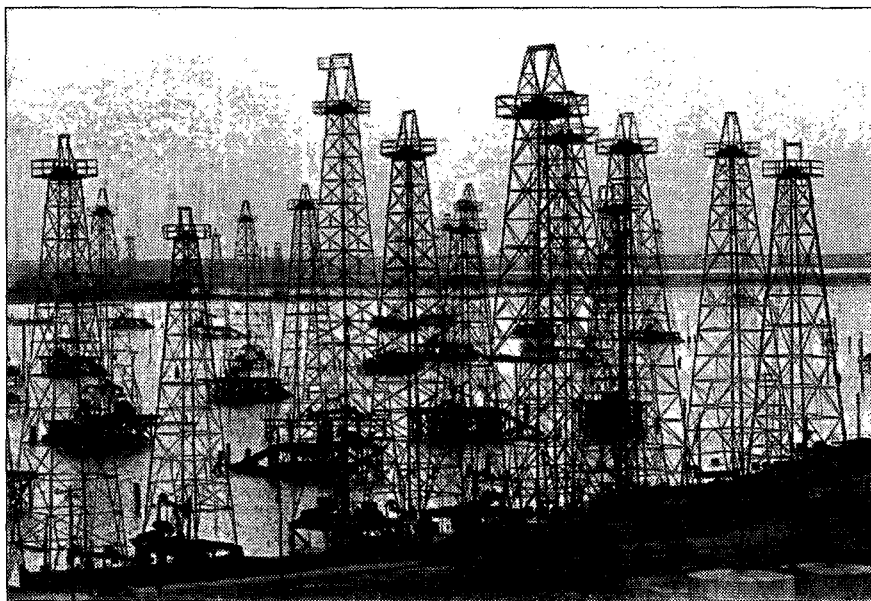
Still, Bush has not adopted the chest-thumping rhetoric of the wise-use movement, as Bob Dole did in 1996. Bush has recognized that global warming may be a problem. He says he's for clean air and water and the great outdoors. And, after testing the popular winds, he did oppose the nuclear waste dump slated for the predominantly Latino town of Sierra Blanca on the Mexican border. Of course, a few weeks later he gave his support for a new dump in Andrews County, near New Mexico. For Bush, the issue was neither the environment nor public health—just craven politics. Bush's march to the White House depends on him getting the Latino vote in the general election.

**W**hen studied more closely Bush's record and environmental philosophy, if you can call it that, fit smoothly into the trend toward market-based and anti-regulatory approaches that began during his father's tenure as president and accelerated under Clinton and Gore. But there are distinguishing characteristics to Bush's environmental platform. Where Gore would loosen environmental regulations, Bush seems more than willing to throw them out altogether. Gore might consider leasing the profitable concessions at national parks such as Yosemite or Grand Canyon to corporations; Bush appears open to the idea of selling entire parks off to the highest bidder. Gore might waive punitive fines against violators of the Clean Air Act; Bush has already told companies in his state that compliance with that law should be voluntary.

Bush needs to be spoon-fed his political philosophy, particularly on matters as arcane as environmental regulation. So last May he convened a summit of his environmental advisers, a roster of pro-industry spin-doctors who view environmental laws as a bothersome impediment to the growth of the Dow Jones industrial average. Christopher DeMuth of the American Enterprise Institute, for example, is a typical right-wing think tank policy wonk, forever babbling on about the heavy-

handed tactics of the federal environmental bureaucrats. Under the rubric of "local control," DeMuth wants to devolve federal environmental law to the states, to ease what he calls the "regulatory burden" on corporations and allow the market to "allocate the use" of natural resources like oil and timber.

Bush also has huddled with Fred Krupp, director of the conservative Environmental Defense Fund, which has been pushing



***Bush's advisers are pro-industry spin doctors who view environmental laws as an impediment to the Dow Jones industrial average.***

market-oriented ideas, such as pollution credits, for years. EDF helped fashion the Clean Air Act revisions of 1990, which President Bush cited as one of the cornerstones of his presidency. This spring, Krupp advised the younger Bush on sweeping changes to Texas clean air standards, which for the first time attempted to regulate emissions from old, "grandfathered" power plants. In describing the bill, Bush said: "I believe government and industry, jobs and the environment can coexist. The old command and control school is not what I am for. I'm for setting standards and letting industry comply." But Bush left out a key word: "voluntarily." Those old power plants are on the honor system when it comes to meeting the new air standards, and there are no penalties for violating the rules.

Another influential Bush adviser on environmental matters, particularly on wildlife and public land issues, is Mark Racicot, Montana's Republican governor, who is said to be at the top of Bush's list of candidates for Interior Department secretary. "Racicot talks like Babbitt, but walks like Watt," says Steve Kelly, a Montana environmentalist. "The governor likes process and consensus groups and all of these approaches that the Clinton team has perfected. But he uses them to advance the interests of corporations and his political backers."

When he served as attorney general, Racicot wanted to restart the hunting of grizzly bears in the northern Rockies, arguing that selling grizzly hunting tags would create a "financial incentive" to protect the bears. As governor, he convened a consensus group to try to keep the bull trout from being listed as an endangered species. He also orchestrated the bloody campaign to gun down bison that stray from the boundaries of Yellowstone Park. In each of these matters, Racicot has faced off against the federal government, arguing that states and local communities should be in charge of environmental standards and wildlife laws.

This position closely mirrors Bush's own approach to endangered species: He has vigorously opposed plans to add the jaguar, Arkansas River shiner, and Barton Springs salamander to the federal endangered species list. He also has failed to protect endangered sea turtles on the Gulf Coast. "Texans know best how to protect our environment and conserve our own natural resources," Bush wrote in a 1998 letter to Rep. Don Young, the

fire-breathing Alaska Republican who heads the House Resources Committee. "The heavy-handed approach of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in implementing the Endangered Species

Act has only served to strengthen that belief. ... The Endangered Species Act must be carefully enacted and administered to minimize the potential impact on private property rights and private property must never be taken by government regulation without just compensation to the property owner."

Bush has already made clear that his views on endangered species won't change if elected president. On a fundraising spree through Oregon and Washington last summer, Bush told reporters that he would not countenance any plan to breach dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers, the last hope to save dwindling runs of salmon and steelhead trout. Instead, Bush said he would capture the salmon, load them into barges and haul them around the dams.

Several of the intellectual gurus behind Bush's environmental agenda have done time at the Political Economy Research Center in Bozeman, Montana, one of the kookier outfits in the West. This think tank is a Petri dish for "new resource" economists, free-market environmentalists and property-rights zealots. But the PERCs also are astute poll diviners who recognize the importance of spin. They know that the American public overwhelmingly desires stronger environmental safeguards and the preservation of public lands. And they understand that a presidential candidate who campaigns against the environment will never unpack in the White House. "If you talk about the environment the way the Republican Congress did," PERC executive director Terry Anderson says. "This will be a losing issue."

After several briefings with PERC, Bush began to come around. "We presented him with the seeds of a positive, constructive agenda that can move environmentalism away from our current gridlock and toward a win-win improvement,"

Anderson says. "He's astute enough that he's going to at least embrace some of the ideas that were put forward."

What is that agenda? First, PERC wants to downscale federal environmental laws and regulations. Then they call for eliminating most, if not all, federal financial support for environmental protection, allowing market incentives and property rights to dictate how pollution is controlled and rare wildlife species are protected. And the mavens at PERC want to fund the national parks and national forests by charging user fees for hiking, camping, hunting and bird watching. This bottom-line approach already has been implemented in Texas, where the state parks are required to be self-sufficient. Under Bush, the parks receive no funds from the state general fund, but rely exclusively on park fees and a modest slice of a state sales tax from sporting goods sales.

Texas ranks 49th in the nation in park funding. Facilities are in disrepair and use is down, as lower income families have been priced out of the "park market." A 1998 audit

showed that the Texas park system faces a \$186 million funding backlog. And that's with a miserly management approach that has seen no new park land acquired since Bush became governor. There are no additions planned for the future either. "Under the Bush/PERC plan, the national forests and national

parks will be operated by concessionaires, meaning entertainment companies, such as Disney and Time Warner," says Scott Silver, director of Wild Wilderness, an environmental group based in Bend, Oregon. "If a given national park doesn't make a profit, it could be shut down or sold off."

In fact, Anderson and his colleagues at PERC call for the privatization of all federal lands. "We offer a blueprint for auctioning off all public lands over 20 to 40 years," Anderson writes in a paper recently published by the Cato Institute. "Both environmental quality and economic efficiency would be enhanced by private rather than public ownership."

**T**he upcoming election will be a crucial one for the environment: The Endangered Species Act is in limbo, the Kyoto Global Warming Treaty remains mired in international squabbles, and the oil companies are poised to pounce on the last reserves on public lands. A recent survey by Republican polling whiz Frank Luntz shows that more than 70 percent of Americans want environmental laws strengthened; they also want less logging and more wilderness, fewer hazardous waste dumps and more wolves.

Yet these voters have been left with a grim and unsatisfying choice: Gore's rhetoric sounds green enough, but his record as a senator and vice president is one of unceasing capitulations to big timber, oil and sugar. Bush is predisposed toward indifference on the environment, but his financial backers include some of the world's most extravagant and unrepentant polluters. If we know anything about Bush, it is that he is a faithful servant to his financial masters. "Everyone is talking about the earth dying," says David Brower, head of Earth Island Institute. "Well, the earth isn't dying, it's being killed."

George W. Bush is a hired gun. ■

**Where Gore would loosen environmental regulations, Bush seems more than willing to throw them out altogether.**



# FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS

## Candidates court the Latino vote

By Juan Gonzalez

**B**ack in 1996, Republican Party national leaders sought to outdo each other with draconian federal and state laws that targeted the country's immigrant population, accompanied with television campaign ads that portrayed our borders being overrun by undocumented and crime-prone Latinos. In his run for president, party standard-bearer Bob Dole supported cutbacks in federal benefits to even legal immigrants, and he urged making English the nation's official language.

What a difference four years make.

This time around, we've heard none of the same immigrant bashing from White House hopefuls on the Republican side. It seems party leaders have learned a lesson from the enormous backlash by Latino voters in the past few years, when millions who had remained permanent residents for years opted to become citizens to protect themselves from Republican-engineered cut-offs in federal and state benefits. Those new citizens immediately registered as Democrats and voted to unseat anyone who had targeted them.

Bill Clinton garnered only 61 percent of the Latino vote in 1992, but that figure rose to 72 percent in 1996, a clear indication that most Hispanics regarded the Republicans as anti-Latino. It hasn't always been that way. Back in 1980, Ronald Reagan got 40 percent of the Latino vote nationwide. But lately even in Florida, where the Cuban immigrant community has always been faithfully Republican, the Democrats have made big headway: Clinton grabbed 44 percent of the Florida Cuban vote in 1996, compared to Dole's 46 percent.

Part of George W. Bush's appeal to Republican Party operatives is the possibility that he will be able to siphon off from the Democrats that big share of Latino voters Reagan once enjoyed. "These guys do an about-face and now they're all trying to campaign in Spanish," says Juan Andrade, president of the Chicago-based United States Hispanic Leadership Institute.

But we are not talking only percentages here. Substantial numbers are at stake. Even as most Americans are increasingly being turned off by electoral politics, Latinos are being turned on. Between 1992 and 1996, the number of votes cast decreased by more than 9 million among non-Hispanic whites and decreased by 15,000 among blacks. But votes increased by a whopping 690,000 among Latinos.

Today's "enlightened" Republicans—represented by Bush, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan—are working overtime to be seen as pro-immigrant. The presidential candidates have to work fast because the front-loaded primary schedule means that the big states where most Latinos reside are voting early. On March 7,

California, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland and Ohio will be among 11 states holding primaries. Each of these states has a huge Latino electorate. California's, of course, is the biggest prize, and New York is not far behind. But Massachusetts and Connecticut have sizeable Latino populations in each of their major cities. Those primaries will be followed the next week by votes in Texas and Florida. Most Latinos in the country will have had a chance to express their presidential preferences by March 14.

**Y**et other than producing commercials in Spanish, few of the candidates have touched on the issues most important to Latinos. Gore has come closest with his repeated calls for raising the minimum wage—something that disproportionately affects immigrant workers—and with his emphasis on greater spending for education.

But we have heard nothing in presidential debates so far about the devastating economic crisis in Latin America that is fueling more immigration to this country, the massive uproar in Puerto Rico over the Navy's bombing practice in Vieques, police abuse and killings and racial profiling in black and Latino inner-city neighborhoods, the rise of the digital divide in an increasingly technology-driven economy, the growth of sweatshop labor, or the rampant exploitation of immigrant labor in much of white suburban



Few candidates have touched on the issues most important to Latinos.

America. Nor have we heard any of the candidates tackle a question that, thanks to the national uproar over the fate of 6-year-old Elián González, has once again been thrust into the spotlight: When will our country end this irrational blockade of Cuba that has been condemned by virtually every nation in the world?

Maybe some hardy reporters will force the candidates to respond to a few of these questions during the next few weeks, but don't bet on it. National political reporters, even those on the left, are overwhelmingly white and generally more ignorant about the nation's 30 million Latinos than the candidates. ☐

BRIAN SNYDER/NEWSMAKERS

# **MORE MARKETPLACE MEDICINE**

## ***Neither Democrat's health plan will fix the system***

*By David Moberg*

**T**his year's Democratic primaries looked like an opportunity for an illuminating and timely debate on health care. After all, the system is unraveling into crisis, with the numbers of uninsured and dissatisfaction among those who are insured both growing—despite the longest period of economic growth in the nation's history. Health care is a top voter concern, and voter sentiment on health issues clearly favors the Democrats.

Yet for all their lofty proclamations about the need for universal care, neither Bill Bradley nor Al Gore is offering a plan that will fix what ails the system—and, in some ways, they could make things worse. It's a sad commentary on American politics that the presumably more liberal candidate in the race, Bradley—who has said he wants to revive the Democratic Party with a plan guaranteeing health care for all—is offering a variant of proposals from the right-wing Heritage Foundation and has won support from the insurance lobby.

Here's the heart of the issue: The most serious problems of the health care system stem from relying on the private marketplace and for-profit corporations. But the Democratic proposals attempt to tinker around the edges while preserving the basic system and increasing public subsidies to the for-profit insurers and providers. While Republicans want to privatize the system even more, most Democrats—even as they offer tepid defenses of Medicare—are seduced by the misguided idea that private companies and competition can cut costs and increase consumer choice. That approach only produces fragmentation, high bureaucratic costs and poor care.

The framework for the current debate was set by the failure of Clinton's comprehensive health care reform plan in 1993. Clinton thought he could avoid a fight by shunning advocacy of a national health insurance program—like Canada's "single-payer" system—and instead incorporating the big insurance companies and HMOs. But Clinton failed to launch a strong grassroots political campaign for his plan. And the plan was so complex and flawed that it left many citizens confused, worried and vulnerable to the counterattack unleashed by industry.

Democrats learned the wrong lesson from this experience. In elite Beltway circles, the prevailing belief is that dramatic reforms can't be passed and don't have public support. This is reflected in Gore's strategy: Though he wants to move toward access to universal health care, he says, "we have all learned that we cannot overhaul the system in one fell swoop." Thus the only alternative is incremental reform. "The current wisdom, when you've got two-party politics, is that you better think practically and do so in a way that doesn't incur the wrath of large stakeholders in the health care system," says Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA, a health care reform think tank.

Yet it is essential, if the United States is ever going to get good, reasonably priced, universal health care, to take on those large stakeholders—especially the insurance and pharmaceutical industries. In 1993, Clinton hoped his compromise would help him avoid right-wing attacks on "big government." But by now one thing should be perfectly clear: Any government health care proposal, unless it is a no-strings-attached subsidy of private health industry businesses, will be attacked as "big government," no matter how modest it is. (Witness the latest television ad campaign against the highly popular idea of Medicare prescription drug coverage as a threat of "big government in your medicine cabinet.") So would-be health care reformers might as well be prepared from the beginning to defend government and attack the profiteers. It isn't really that hard to do.

**A**ccording to an October Kellogg Foundation survey, 80 percent of Americans, including large majorities of Republicans, already think that health care should be everyone's right. The survey also found overwhelming public support—around 90 percent—for the idea that everyone should be guaranteed prenatal care, childhood immunizations, routine check-ups, emergency room visits, mental health care, eye care, dental care and prescription drugs. Only 15 percent of respondents said the health care system itself was "in good health," while 35 percent characterized it as in "critical condition" or "terminally ill."

The public also profoundly distrusts insurance companies: By 2 to 1, those surveyed said managed care decreased the quality of health care. By wide margins, they denounced the insurance industry as having too much control over health care and complained of companies restricting patient choice and inadequately reimbursing patients. Fully 85 percent agreed that "much of the expense of health care in this country is created by insurance bureaucracy."

These opinions about the shortcomings of profit-oriented, market-driven medicine are supported by recent research. Despite steady economic growth, the number of Americans without insurance grew by 1 million people every year in the last decade, up to more than 44 million in 1998. Yet contrary to conventional wisdom, private insurers and hospitals are not more effective at holding down costs. Over the past two fiscal years, Medicare costs rose 0.5 percent, but private insurance premiums increased more than 15 percent. (This has led to new projections that Medicare will be solvent at current rates for another two decades.)

Profit-oriented HMOs, the darling of privatizers, have proven to be a source of one-time cost savings and long-term problems. A Harvard University study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* last year concluded that investor-owned HMOs scored worse on all quality



measures than non-profit HMOs. Studies have found that HMOs cost Medicare about 6 percent more for each beneficiary than conventional fee-for-service plans, even though HMOs selectively enrolled healthier older people, and, more recently, began cutting back benefits or dumping Medicare patients altogether. In recent years, there also have been revelations of massive fraud and overcharging by managed care companies and investor-owned hospitals.

Meanwhile, Americans are paying hugely inflated prices for prescription drugs. Because its national health service bargains with companies to win reduced prices, Canadians paid roughly one-third less for the same drugs as Americans, according to a study released last summer. If the United States struck the same deal, Americans would save more than \$16 billion a year. While HMOs often bargain to reduce prices, their savings are far less than what the Veterans Administration wins, and the drug companies charge the highest prices of all to the one-fourth of Americans without prescription drug insurance.

**B**radley knows the system is wasteful. In announcing his health care plan, he noted that administrative costs add up to \$300 billion a year. But his proposal would rely on that system even more heavily. He would require parents to enroll children in private insurance plans (if they are not covered through an employer plan) and provide subsidies according to income. He would eliminate Medicaid and offer adults an opportunity to enroll with private insurers offered through the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan, providing a refundable tax credit scaled to their incomes and tax deductions for all insurance premiums.

Trying to inform and enroll individuals in this fashion would incur huge administrative and outreach costs—possibly eating up 40 percent of premium costs, compared to 5 percent of premiums under big corporate plans, according to Economic Policy Institute health economist Edie Russell. The reimbursements are likely to be inadequate, leaving many families to pay more out of pocket or unable to afford insurance. Also, many employers will be tempted to drop insurance for their workers, pushing them into Bradley's plan and pocketing the money they now spend on employee insurance.

Gore's plan, while less ambitious, relies on many of the same inefficient, ineffective mechanisms. It would expand the Children's Health Insurance Plan, a Clinton/Gore initiative to provide health insurance to poor kids—even though during CHIP's first two years the number of uninsured children increased dramatically, partly as a result of welfare reform. Both Gore and Bradley hope to offer pre-

scription drugs through Medicare, but the program would be optional and rely on private insurers—the least effective method, but one designed to avoid political confrontation with the drug companies.

The candidates' caution reflects not only the typical clinging to the supposed political center, but the absence of strong, coherent popular movement for national health insurance. However, after a period of retrenchment, the movement for a single-payer insurance system is growing, and support among health care professionals for national health insurance is expanding. But the key ingredient—support from organized labor—is still missing. There also are several state initiatives, including a solid multiyear campaign to enact a statewide single-payer system in Maryland.

***Without a strong popular movement for national health insurance, most politicians will not embrace real reform.***



JOEFF DAVIS

One of the most promising notions is to build on the appeal of Medicare by improving it—adding prescriptions and reducing patient out-of-pocket payments, for example—and expanding it to include everyone. “Medicare for all” is an idea that is easily understood and familiarly American. As numerous studies have demonstrated, it is possible to pay for both the improvements and the expansion largely through savings—by eliminating administrative overhead and bargaining for lower drug prices, for example. If “Medicare for all” seems too ambitious, then a “Medicare for kids,” automatically enrolling every child under 18, might be more politically appealing. This would be one of the few incremental reforms that could help break the grip of the marketplace and be a stepping stone to Medicare for everyone.

Regardless of the research data and opinion surveys, most politicians will not embrace real reform. There will be no significant progress until there is a massive popular movement expressing the already well-established belief that the government should guarantee everyone decent health care and directly confronting the corporate powers and market ideology that are the real obstacles to this goal. ■

# Bohemian Rhapsody

By Sandy Zipp

**B**ohemia," wrote Malcolm Cowley, "is always yesterday." His classic *Exile's Return* (1934) looks back to the "literary odyssey of the 1920s" for its nostalgic and bitter take on the fortunes of artistic dissent, but there is something historically con-

**Weird Like Us:  
My Bohemian America**  
By Ann Powers  
Simon & Schuster  
288 pages, \$23

stant about the sense of romantic dilettantism and utopian wishfulness that always shadows bohemian rejections of middle-class comfort. This is a fundamental paradox within so many supposedly avant-garde artistic moments—an old-fashioned aura deployed for forward thinking aims. Perhaps, as commentators on bohemia have often noticed, this is because bohemia is closely tied to the "bourgeoisie" it habitually disavows.

Bohemia requires the respectable, striving present as a foil for its imagined past and projected future. All the familiar artistic tropes that have energized various bohemian moments down through the years—sacred ideograms and mystic visions, idyllic childhood and vicarious poverty, Orientalist fantasies and picturesque primitivisms, erotic excess and flirtation with madness—are staged as retreats from the inexorable spread of what Cowley's generation called "Babbitry." They are ripostes against the businessman's culture of the mass palliative, the secure cul-de-sac laid out by the *Saturday Evening Post*, Pat Boone, the Rockefeller Foundation or Time-Life that always, by definition, threatens to corrupt bohemia's seditious gestures of nonconformity.

It is no mistake, then, that most chroniclers of bohemia—whether leering tourists or jaded memoirists—have been mired in the same fascination with invented pasts and conjured foreign lands. The story of bohemia is almost always a look back to a world now gone, just subsumed by the tide of

conformity it was both born from and scurried to reject. In one sense Ann Powers' new book, *Weird Like Us: My Bohemian America*, is little different from its predecessors. Her hybrid version of memoir and social reportage is a look back on American underground culture of the '80s and '90s, its various flirtations with mainstream influence, and its eventual emergence as one of the prime spectacles at the heart of information-era capitalism's Wall Street-fueled boom.

With a note of regret that will be familiar for many of her cohort in the underground of the '80s, Powers recounts her own loss of bohemian innocence as a parallel to the culture-wide cash-in that corporate America found in the "alternative" aesthetic. Her final chapter, called "Selling Out," tells how she moved from San Francisco, where "girls in thrift store dresses" wander the sun-dappled streets, to New York and a job with Moloch's house propaganda organ, the *New York Times*, reviewing music industry product for jaded straphangers and starry-eyed bridge and tunnel drones. But while Powers' book has its share of lament, often of the hackneyed variety, she ultimately veers away from loss toward celebration. For her, bohemia survives in the ruins of its former splendor. Sifting through the historical fallout of that old '60s imperative to break down the walls between the personal and the political becomes a search for residues of true cultural invention and considered ways of living.

**I**mplicitly, Powers' book demonstrates that the events of the '90s spell the end of bohemia as we know it. First, the underground art and culture of the past 30 years were never dramatically opposed to popular culture in the way that much of the modernism of an earlier generation was. After the '60s much of the underground culture that preserved (or merely recalled) the spontaneous, boundary-crossing spirit of Fluxus, Situationism or Pop Art was itself "low culture" that merely poached from "high art" traditions or

ignored them altogether, proving that the distinction was already largely meaningless. Punk, sex radicalism, hip hop, zines, performance art or any of the myriad other subcultural niches that flowered in those years, all are steeped in mass culture even as they play out the familiar bohemian act of rejecting commodification and posturing about authenticity.

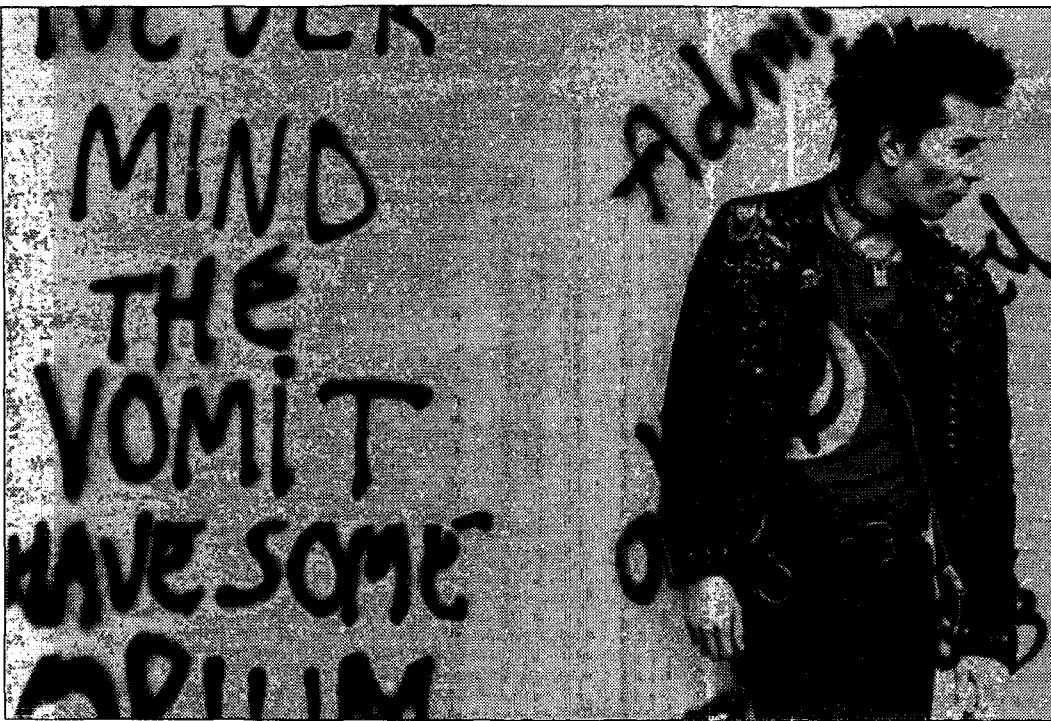
In addition, with the rise in personal politics, the continuing proliferation of information technology, and multinational capital's intensified colonization of commercial entertainment industries, almost all mass culture has become infused, at some level, with the signs and symbols of bohemianism. There is a strange paradox here: Local alternative utopias have been colonized or made seemingly redundant by the national media. Bohemia now survives everywhere and nowhere.

Powers makes the crucial—and somewhat unprecedented—step of investigating this recent bohemia not for the quality or importance of its cultural output, but for the way that underground ideals shape the mundane concerns of daily life. Many studies of

**The story of bohemia  
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"subculture" zealously defend the creative capabilities of much-maligned youth cultures. Powers takes a longer view. What happens to youthful whimsy and passion when, as the seminal punk rock band Minor Threat put it, "we're all headed for that adult crash"? Rather than provide analyses of music, literature and fashion or profiles of cult-figures and minor celebrities, Powers urges her readers to forget "great artists and eccentrics" in favor of the "salt-of-the-earth voyagers who challenge the norm as a matter of course." "Bohemia," she points out





Mainstream culture co-opts bohemia's countercultural phenomena almost as fast as they appear. Here Gary Oldman portrays Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols in the 1986 movie *Sid and Nancy*.

pot, and hash" and "nearly broke up with my boyfriend, wandered through a few stranger's parties, and ended up on the stage of the Kit Kat Club with a few similarly wrecked friends, playing Grendel's mother in an improvised free-jazz opera based on *Beowulf*."

No doubt it is the note of mundanity she gives this catalogue of extremity—haven't we all had our

nights like this?—that Powers hopes will make her point about the everydayness of bohemian excess. But mundanity also renders these sorts of tales, peppered throughout the book, somewhat pedantic, scripted and a touch ridiculous. Their supposed fluidity and randomness is so readily belied by the ease with which they submit to a jumble of paralyzing lifestyle categories: organic gardening, shamanism, kinky spiritualism, straight-edge punk, alternative momism and sado-masochistic fetishism—just to name a few Powers mentions. Such specialized idiosyncrasies sometimes seem like nothing so much as tailor-made niche markets just waiting to be exploited.

Powers does little to allay these worries with the way she depicts her characters. Each of her thematic chapters revolves around the exploits of a handful of her acquaintances or friends from San Francisco, who are, like her, looking back wistfully and critically on their lives. But she manages to undo any complex emotional effect these testimonials might have when she introduces them in stage-set scenes that come off as an unfortunate cross between a hipster spoof of *Martha Stewart Living*, a Chamber of Commerce plug for the Bay Area good life, and a celebrity profile: "Nicola, a dark-haired, pixie-sized

quite rightly, "prosper now through the visions they forge and the communities they form more than through superstar displays of colorful character." Powers stresses "what goes on out of plain sight, the huge decisions people make every day about how to form households, what kind of jobs to take and how to approach them, what money means and how to save or spend it, how sex can be more loving and friendship more durable."

When the dalliances and affectations of youth are forced into an uneasy relationship with the responsibilities of adulthood and the lucrative cruelty of the marketplace, it becomes clear that the underground has always existed in a state of negotiation with "the bigger world that threatens and cradles" it. They have and will continue to remake one another. Discarding utopian dreams, Powers looks for those who "cultivate a family spirit beyond the bounds of the white picket fence" and seeks "a way to rewrite the work ethic to honor passion before obligation, intuition before tradition, and a sense of human decency before procedure." For her, bohemia is instrumental in "giving people different ways to deal with the consumer culture that engulfs them, opening up the cultural conversation about sex and drugs, and refiguring

adulthood to better suit the actual shapes of people's lives."

Powers issues an earnest appeal that may provoke equal parts derisive controversy and befuddled laughter: "I suggest that bohemians embrace selling out. ... For too long we have united only within a culture of rebellion. What we need to refuse is the negativity that comes from always defining ourselves against a society we can't help but live within. It's time to stand up for what we are." Her abrupt embrace of the underground's lurch into the spotlight, while plausible and in some sense overdue, is strangely signaled by the way her book itself lurches from reportage to bohemian self-help.

As with so many other things alternative, the looming specter of the mainstream plays havoc with her best laid plans. Perhaps the most debilitating ripple effect of the great alternative buy-out in the pages of Powers' book is the way that it inevitably makes her efforts at describing the spontaneity and so-called weirdness of her bohemian life appear like little more than a sit-com scenario or a treatment for another rebellion-by-the-numbers teen feature from Miramax. For instance, there was the "Night of the Seven Substances" back in 1982, when she took "acid, speed, two kinds of mushrooms, alcohol,

woman whose assertive comfort in her strong body belies her diminutiveness, offered me a seltzer while the freckly, voluptuous Rebecca unloaded their stuff from a day bag. ... We sat on the bed in her neat, elegant studio, snacking on Grape Nuts and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, talking long into the night about play-party etiquette, the roles of top and bottom, the difference between sado-masochism and dominance-submission, and the fantasy appeal of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." And so on. If Powers wishes to convince us that the underground lives on outside the marketing babble that "alternative culture" has become, she has to demonstrate the import of her experience in a manner that does not merely mimic that ever-present chatter.

**A**nd yet, it is one of the strengths of Powers' book to show that the mundane and the profound always mingle, that political and moral principle are distilled from the quandaries of everyday routine. For her, "The more informal areas of our lives—the codes of behavior that we perfect over time, in our daily routines—set the stage for everything else, including how we vote and how we protest."

She forces us to ask how a way of life might be culled from lifestyle, character pulled from personality, knowledge shaped out of nonsense, and permanence negotiated within flux. The details of daily life reveal depths. All the clutter of commodity culture can be made to mean. Grape Nuts and S/M, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and studio apartments, each is a medium through which "kinship, labor, love, leisure, consumerism, and identity itself" must be understood. These are the sorts of scenes lives are made from. This is what we're all stuck with. Or, as Powers puts it, "The marketplace is global; we can't live on some space station outside it. The question is how to stay human within it."

In the end, Powers' recommendations, while forthright, remain inchoate. Is she advocating storming not the barricades, but the employment offices of major record companies, magazines and newspapers? Perhaps she wants to infuse every mass medium with bohemian messages—a sort of postmodern, information-age Popular

Front minus the controlling hand of the Communist Party. A goal not without its virtues perhaps, but one that requires something largely missing here: politics. Powers leaves no doubt that a life lived this way is worth living. She believes that personal principle lies at the heart of all political allegiance. But the point of collective lives *lived* this way remains oblique.

Generally, there is no necessary connection between personal expression and political consciousness; the political ties between the public and the private must be continually forged, maintained and reforged. The punk activism, queer politics and other instances of overt political action that Powers brushes by are significant traditions, and arguably on the rise, but the "alternative culture" that we have in the age of the AOL-Time Warner speculative merger is a thin one indeed. It largely invests in the insularity of entertainment and the promise of private pecuniary gain rather than the public good. Further, much of the bohemian life that Powers celebrates remains mired in solipsism; often its involvement in issues of economic democracy are either disavowed

through irony or secreted away as matters of personal principle.

Of course, it would hardly be kosher or accurate to blame a few indie-rock musicians, sex fetishists and thrift-store hounds for the mass abandonment of public space of the past few generations—particularly considering the rampant campaign of privatization carried out by owning-class interests since the New Deal and before. Still, middle-class complicity with what Mike Davis labels the "underproduction of public space" leaves few of us uncompromised. Due to their refusal to jeopardize the insularity of private life, the denizens of underground America have shown only sporadic interest in overcoming this deleterious drain on American civic life.

Ann Powers' call for grabbing the reins of power through the transformation of everyday life is a compelling rejoinder to this lack of public activity, but ultimately it appears to settle for the pleasures of mainstream success and cultural influence. The hard work of giving the dispersed attachments and principles of subcultural passion public radical force continues to be neglected. ■

## Shock Treatment

By Joshua Rothkopf

**Y**ou'll hurt yourself if you think too hard about Ken Smith's new book, a deceptively whimsical history of progressive education's most desperate measure of the '50s and '60s—the "social guidance" film. Lurid,

**Mental Hygiene:  
Classroom Films, 1945-1970**  
By Ken Smith  
Blast Books  
238 pages, \$24.95

conformist and often frighteningly gory, thousands of these films were commissioned by school boards across America to indoctrinate their students into proper dating habits (no sex), good citizenship (returning library books on time) and a stomach-churning fear of running with scissors or driving too fast. Dope experimenters became howling heroin junkies

within 10 minutes of screen time ("Narcotics: Pit of Despair"); one night with a "girl who parks" inevitably led to syphilis ("The Innocent Party").

Do you remember this programming from your curriculum? If so, then *Mental Hygiene* may resonate like the righting of some wrong—an exposé of the seeds of countless debilitating complexes. How else for Smith to justify the better part of 10 years spent ferreting through university archives for forgotten films about toenail clipping ("Healthy Feet") and the onset of menstruation ("It's Wonderful Being a Girl")? His recent invitations to appear on National Public Radio and a 70-film curatorial stint in New York suggest the arrival of important insight.

But Smith seems embarrassed to corral his exhaustive research into something so bald; instead he comes





A film like "The Outsider" only becomes darkly funny with years of hindsight.

these bigger-budgeted kin (*Rebel without a Cause*, *The Blackboard Jungle*) seem unfair, as they obviously do to Smith, who peevishly steers clear of them, but it's a missed opportunity that could have shed light on the failed cinema of educators—noble-minded but hopelessly uncool. And given the dawning awareness among advertisers of the exploding youth market in the same era, it's inexcusable that Smith doesn't speculate on the provocative likelihood of teenagers being forced to watch a scare film like "Keep Off the Grass" in the morning and paying to see *Easy Rider* at night.

Similarly, the complicated *frisson* between the tightly constructed universes of social guidance films and their roiling civil contexts of rampant McCarthyism, political assassinations, mandated interracial busing and the rise of the counterculture is cursorily treated in a two-page "historical overview." A Nixonite social guidance film like 1970's "The Political Process" (which champions a bland form of volunteerism, answering phones in congressional offices) deserves to be considered in its expanded context of student rioting and corridor-blocking sit-ins.

It's baffling how thoroughly Smith avoids exploiting these parallel narra-

**"Keep Off the Grass" in the morning, pay to go see *Easy Rider* at night.**

across like an Egyptologist blinded by the sun, unsure of what he has found. He opts for that familiar pose of trendy remoteness, trading what might have been a revealing pop anthropology for the hipster's "can-you-believe-this" smirk. (Smith has previous experience at a now-defunct comedy channel mining these bizarre films for decontextualized laughs.) He never gets too deep, circling the material with a slippery sense of irony; he knows a film like "Are You Popular?" only becomes darkly funny after years of hindsight. But with each jokey synopsis on the merits of obsessive hand washing ("Soapy the Germ Fighter") or owning a car ("What It Means To Be an American"), *Mental Hygiene* reveals itself as one more example of smugly enlightened cultural tomb raiding, and Smith as the good little boy who watched too many tracts about the dangers of questioning authority.

**W**hat plagues the book is its overwhelming sense of historical detachment, resulting in a postmodern froth of almost complete meaninglessness. Even Smith's strongest suit, his dozens of wry capsule reviews of the films, suffers from its thoughtless presentation in an alphabetized

encyclopedia taking up half the book. A chronological ordering might have charted the fascinating escalation of decades of parental anxiety: from bad manners to unplanned pregnancies; from "fitting in" with the group to "saying no" to drug-induced peer pressures; from practicing better penmanship to learning to "duck and cover" in an atomic blast.

As such though, the listing can only be a reference to itself, a strangely compelling catalog of secondhand kitsch marked mainly by its profound uselessness—since most of these films are lost or unavailable to the casual viewer. (Either as a remedy or shrewd cross promotion, the publisher offers a companion videocassette of selected films sold separately.) The fact that most of these films had to be rescued by Smith from certain oblivion carries, in itself, a poignancy his book only hints at; it's hard to fathom how teachers could have ever hoped to survive a cultural war waged against such iconic romantic loners as James Dean or a hip-swiveling Elvis Presley. Image-makers of Hollywood, always better at this kind of gig, were busy extolling their own form of guidance, also targeted to kids and in many ways just as didactic. Perhaps comparisons with

tives of Hollywood and history, which might have wedged him a purchase into the critical conundrum he all too soon confronts (as would any writer on this subject): the difficulty of judging a social guidance film's initial reception or effectiveness. Did these films actually change habits and behavior? Did they traumatize kids or were they laughed at?

Smith's ambivalence on this rates a glib two paragraphs in his introductory "primer," acknowledging both the longevity of the genre—it must have been considered valuable to have sur-

vived, he asserts vaguely—and the especially rebellious generation it targeted. One would think that a collection of testimony from teachers or the many psychologists who lent their endorsements to these films, let alone from former audience members, would be of paramount importance.

Chapters devoted to the scrappily independent producers and crews—who labored on these films in relative anonymity with surprising conviction—are steps in the right direction though; many of these self-styled *auteurs* could easily justify books of their own. Of particular mention is David Smart, the multimillionaire publisher of *Esquire*, who established a small film studio on his private estate in the suburbs of Chicago after a reputedly inspiring visit to the classrooms of Nazi Germany. His company, Coronet, would go on to produce some of the more polished and benign “classics” of the genre (“Shy Guy,” “Dating: Do’s and Don’ts”)

before its pathophobic founder died on the operating table after electing an ill-advised exploratory colon surgery. (There’s something apt to that.)

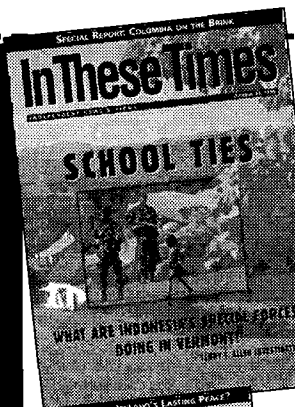
Smart’s alter ego in terms of style, content and collateral was Sid Davis, a hulking former stand-in for John Wayne, who broke into the lucrative guidance film market with his crude warning of perverts in sport jackets called “The Dangerous Stranger.” Intended for fourth graders, the film was such a success with school boards that Davis was given *carte blanche* to pursue even more alarmist treatments of topics such as playing with fire (“Live and Learn”), driving too fast to impress a date (“What Made Sammy Speed?”) and homosexuality (“Boys Beware”). All featured a signature Davis trademark: the unforgiving narrator, mercilessly intoning lines like, “Can you continue the way you’re going and stay out of trouble? *You wish you knew!*”

Smith is more assured when discussing these filmmakers and others,

formulating the social guidance phenomenon in straightforward terms of profit and passion. But the gravitation of entrusted educators to this shrieking brand of disinformation remains a mystery and the chief failure of Smith’s lazy investigation—all the more upsetting in light of examples as recent as 1972’s “Drugs and the Nervous System”: “Many young children have eaten several sweetened aspirin tablets thinking they were candy—and died!”

Twenty years too late, *Mental Hygiene* settles for easy laughs. But who are we really laughing at when young anorexics dream of being Ally McBeal, AIDS is still considered a “gay disease,” and 12-year-olds flock on cue to the latest computerized product sermon from George Lucas? It might take more than the passing of time to identify the social conditioning happening today, a mental hygiene far more insidious, shielded by publicists and our own urges. Though Smith would have us sigh with relief, we are not yet survivors. ■

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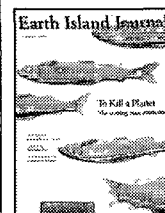


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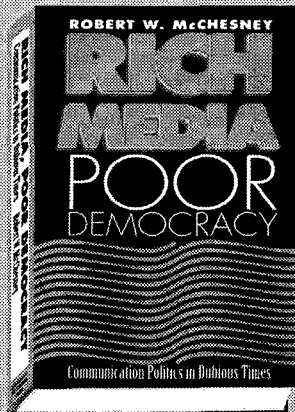
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Script submitted to White House Office of National Drug Control Policy by producers of *Barney*

BARNEY  
Hey, boys and girls! Let's sing a song about how special we all are. Are you ready? Here we go: "I love you, you love me, we're a happy family."

BARNEY  
Hey, boys and girls! Here's a new song for especially smart kids. Are you ready? Here we go: "Watch your folks. Do they drink wine? Then it might be that time. To call your teacher, call the cops. Say your folks are high on hops. Don't forget to turn them in. The police will give you a big gold pin!"

Script submitted to White House Office of National Drug Control Policy by producers of *Ally McBeal*

ALLY  
I can't think about that case right now. There are only two decent men left in the whole city, and I have a run in my stocking. Anyone for lunch? There's this new place, serves a single pea on a watercress leaf.

LING  
I can't eat there. I'm on a diet. Besides, that setting doesn't provide enough opportunities to stereotype me as an oriental exotic who likes working in the sex trade.

ALLY  
Wasn't it great the way President Clinton stopped ethnic cleansing by only bombing military installations in Serbia and Kosovo?

LING  
Yeah. And what about those Chinese whiners who got their boxers all in a knot over their silly embassy getting bombed? I mean, who's bringing McDonald's to them, anyway? Want to go to that new mineral water bar on Fourth?

Script returned to producers of *Barney*

Script returned to producers of *Ally McBeal*

Script submitted to White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (George W. Bush administration) by producers of *Law & Order*

GREEN  
But you always pushed to treat juveniles like adults in the criminal justice system.

McCOY  
I've changed my mind. It doesn't do anyone any good if we turn 11-year-olds into lifelong sociopaths.

GREEN  
But the kid only stole a car. And he's 13. How can we go after the death penalty? He's begging for mercy.

McCOY  
I can hear the little bastard now—"Please, please, Mr. McCoy, don't kill me." Fry him.

Script returned to producers of *Law & Order*

Susan J. Douglas teaches communication studies at the University of Michigan and is the author of *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2000

## Deal With the TV Networks, Drug Office Is Reviewing Scripts

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14 — Over the past two years, the Justice Dept. has reviewed more scripts and all kinds of content of some television shows, including "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" and "24." The Justice Dept. is now reviewing scripts for the new season of "24," which is set to air in the fall. The review is part of a broader effort to ensure that television shows do not glorify drug use or other illegal activities. The Justice Dept. is working with the TV networks to ensure that the scripts are appropriate for the audience. The review is also part of a broader effort to ensure that television shows do not glorify drug use or other illegal activities. The Justice Dept. is working with the TV networks to ensure that the scripts are appropriate for the audience.

# MUST-SEE

KELLY

Like, Dylan, how can I even go to the Galleria, hello, with these suede shoes? They are so, like, last week.

DYLAN

Hey girl, you are so money that everyone will be looking at your gorgeous bod, and not even get below the knees.

KELLY

You are like so adorable.

KELLY

Dylan, I was just reading this really cool government report that says if you ever smoke marijuana, you'll become addicted to heroin and turn into an ax murderer and only be able to shop at K-Mart the rest of your life.

DYLAN

I heard that if you smoke marijuana your pubic hair falls out.

KELLY

Ee-yew.

Se to

DR. GREENE

Get a CBC, Cat Scan, MRI, stool sample, chest X-ray, and dilate that cervix, stat!

DR. CORDAY

What is it, Mark?

DR. GREENE

This patient worked in one of those old government buildings in Suitland, Maryland for years. It was filled with asbestos and now she has lung cancer. Plus, she smoked Virginia Slims because "it's a woman thing."

DR. GREENE

It's too late. Don't even bother to crack her. Time of death, 7:45 p.m.

DR. CORDAY

Don't blame yourself, Mark. You did everything you could.

DR. GREENE

Blame myself?! Are you kidding? This is the work of those swarthy, sleazy Colombian and Mexican drug lords who flood our kindergartens with illegal drugs. We need to step up the war on drugs, but the president's hands have been tied!